

Branding recommendations for the FinnCham network

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<p>This thesis serves the purpose of assisting in brand development through internal stakeholder insight. Specifically, the aim of this thesis was to provide branding recommendations for the FinnCham network based on the internal stakeholder's needs and expectations. Insight from the internal stakeholders could support the brand development of FinnCham, which is a newly launched network of Finnish bilateral Chambers of Commerce, Trade Associations and Trade Guilds.</p> <p>This thesis consists of an introduction to the case organization, a theory part and an empirical part. The theory part deals with branding in general and a deeper analysis on brand identity planning and how the designed brand identity could be communicated to the public and internal stakeholders is provided. Stakeholder theories are also looked into to determine how a well-functioning network works. A summary of the theory is provided, which guides the Discussion and conclusions part.</p> <p>The research methodology was qualitative, through six interviews with standardized open-ended questions with respondents chosen by judgmental sampling and with the same questions sent by a questionnaire to the entire population under study. 15 out of 86 respondents answered the questionnaire, making the response rate 17.4 per cent.</p> <p>The respondents had an unclear perception on the FinnCham brand in terms of what the essence of the brand is. Various development suggestions were stated and the needs articulated on how the network would better serve the internal stakeholders. As to the generalizability of the thesis, it should be said that the results do not account for all newly launched brands, due to the unique nature of the multi-organizational FinnCham network. However, the insight gathered by this study can support the brand designers at FinnCham to develop the brand to better meet the needs and expectations of the internal stakeholders.</p>	
Keywords Branding, brand identity, brand perception, stakeholders, networking, cooperation	

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1 The background to the thesis

Branding is crucial for any company or organization in order to place them amongst the competition and in the minds of the customers. It provides an identity and helps the company or organization in its different tasks such as communication and its service providing. It also helps to create the internal culture and the methods it acts by.

The need for this thesis arose because a network called FinnCham was launched. I had been working at the Finland Chamber of Commerce as an office assistant and through the organization's internal newsletter found out about the launching of the FinnCham brand. I saw a possibility to assist in developing it and suggested the thesis to be conducted. There was no common brand for the network, yet the point of the network is to connect its members into a unified brand. This thesis therefore attempts to establish branding recommendations for the FinnCham network by enquiring the expectations of the internal stakeholders of the network.

1.1 Research problem and investigative questions

The research problem is: Developing branding recommendations for the FinnCham network on the expectations and needs of its internal stakeholders.

The investigative questions are:

- 1) What is FinnCham's members' perception of the FinnCham brand at present?
- 2) What are the internal stakeholders' expectations and needs on the brand of FinnCham?
- 3) How could the brand be designed to benefit its internal stakeholders to the fullest and to increase brand awareness and visibility amongst the internal stakeholders?

1.2 Demarcation

The thesis works to provide a set of recommendations for the Finland Chamber of Commerce on the branding of the FinnCham network. By interviewing the internal stakeholders of FinnCham, I clarified the expectations of the internal stakeholders on what the brand should be like. However, the thesis does not provide a step-by-step guide on creating the brand, but it instead presents insight into the views of the internal stakeholders of the network.

The thesis thus looks into the theories on branding but does not provide a complete brand for the FinnCham network. In other words, I did not seek to create the FinnCham brand, but assisted in planning it. I looked into what builds a brand and how this could be communicated. Also theories on the stakeholder networking are looked into, as the stakeholders contribute to the brand i.e. who has the power to state expectations and brand needs. The internal stakeholders under consideration included the 77 bilateral Chambers of Commerce, Trade Associations and Trade guild located globally, outside of Finland. Also, the 15 bilateral Trade Associations located within Finland were included.

1.3 Anticipated benefits to the stakeholders

The benefit for the Finland Chamber of Commerce is evident, as the results will help them move on in the project and make it easier to coordinate everything. The internal stakeholders of the FinnCham network will most definitely benefit from the research, as the researcher will interview them and find out their needs and expectations of the new network. From the data gathered from the research, recommendations and suggestions were made for the development of the FinnCham brand. I, the researcher also benefitted from this thesis topic greatly, as the topic is something close to my heart and it fits perfectly with their specialization of marketing. Myself being interested in the topic ensured quality work and the whole project provided me with valuable experience.

1.4 Key concepts

In order for the reader to understand the focus of this thesis, an explanation of the investigative questions is provided. The first question attempted to figure out the FinnCham members' i.e. internal stakeholders' perception of the FinnCham brand at present. Here, the researcher tries to find out how the internal stakeholders see the brand and what they think of it. Also, if the interviewee had no recollection of what FinnCham was, then this also had meaning. Also the identity, as in, how they feel about the organization was investigated and "brand identity" is further explained in chapter 3.1. By the internal stakeholders, I meant the employees or trustees (people who work for an organization with no pay) of the bilateral Chambers of Commerce, Trade Associations and Trade Guilds. The members are the different organizations (Chambers of the Commerce, Trade Associations and Trade Guilds) that are inside the FinnCham umbrella brand. The term "brand image" is explained in chapter 3.1.

The second question focused on what the internal stakeholders are expecting from the brand; how they expect to benefit from the brand and how they would like to benefit from the brand. The benefits could be in terms of the services, the credibility and the recognition of the Chambers, Trade Associations and Trade Guilds. This was a very important question, as it helped in defining the recommendations for the FinnCham brand.

The third question was all about planning and designing the brand in order to best serve the internal stakeholders and therefore the whole brand. For the purpose of conciseness, I will use the terms "Associations" for "Trade Associations" and "Guilds" for "Trade Guilds" in the thesis. What I meant with "to best serve the internal stakeholders" is how to plan the brand in order to meet the expectations and needs of the internal stakeholders, so that they understand the brand and benefit from it. In order to have a brand identity, the internal stakeholders must feel that it truly is the identity, as the identity comes from within the organization. Currently, the network and the brand are forming, as it has just been launched. The recommendations from this thesis will support the forming of the brand.

Also, an explanation of the word “network” is needed in order to fully understand the topic of the thesis. Egan (2004, 189) affirms that a network is a bundle of relationships between individuals and further quotes Chaston to explain that networks are “constituted of formal and informal co-operative relationships whereby individual owners/managers seek to build links with each other in their market with the aim of obtaining the necessary information and knowledge to optimise organisational performance” (1998, in Egan 2004, 89)

2 FinnCham

The Finland Chamber of Commerce launched a network called FinnCham in the autumn of 2011. The newly established FinnCham network connects 77 bilateral Finnish Chambers of Commerce, Trade Associations and Trade Guilds around the world as well as the 15 bilateral Trade Associations within Finland under one umbrella brand. Joining the network does not cost anything and nothing is required from the members upon joining. (Harma H-L., Hatanpää, A., Peltola, M-L. 9 Feb 2012.) The main objective of the network is not to make any structural changes to the members' operations, but to strengthen the status and cooperation between them through a unified brand. (FinnCham, 2011.) The Finland Chamber of Commerce acts as the coordinator of the new network and also adds to the credibility of the project (Vuori, T. 2011).

In the Finnish Chambers of Commerce brand reform, all the regional Chambers of Commerce in Finland are to only be branded under the Finnish name Kauppakamari, which literally means Chamber of Commerce. However, they can still be identified as a particular region's Chamber for example the Lapland Chamber of Commerce or in Finnish, Lapin kauppakamari. Therefore they still serve a particular region within Finland. If speaking about the Chambers in English, one will use the name FinnCham. Therefore, FinnCham now consists of the regional Chambers of Commerce within Finland and the network of the bilateral Chambers of Commerce, Trade Associations and Trade Guilds. This information came public in the early summer 2012. However, the regional Chambers of Commerce in Finland were demarcated out of the scope of this thesis.

2.1 Finland Chamber of Commerce

Chambers of Commerce have been around since the 1500s, and they were established to protect trade against pirates. In modern days, the chambers still act to support and promote trade and to remove any obstacles that lay in front of it. In Finland, the Finland Chamber of Commerce coordinates the activities of the 19 regional Chambers of Commerce, that each work for the benefit of the companies in their own regions. The

Finland Chamber of Commerce also improves operational prerequisites of companies in terms of tax, legislation, traffic and education. It also hands out medals of merit for deserving employees. The Chamber also provides arbitration services and supervises the issuing and certifying of documents needed in international trade. Furthermore, services in auditing supervision, goods inspection and property valuation inside Finland is offered. (Kauppakamari 2012a.)

2.2 Mission statement of FinnCham

The mission of the FinnCham network is to support international business of Finnish companies and to enable networking between companies, the countries that the Finnish Chambers of Commerce, Trade Associations and Guilds are located in and Finland (FinnCham 2012a). The network's vision is to become the best multilateral network that helps Finnish businesses to internationalize by cooperation and networking (FinnCham 2012b).

2.3 Chambers of Commerce, Trade Associations and Trade Guilds

Within Finland, there are 15 bilateral trade associations that are coordinated by the Finland Chamber of Commerce. They work to develop trade relations between Finland and the other country in question (Kauppayhdistys 2012). Globally there are 77 bilateral Chambers of Commerce, Trade Associations and Guilds between Finland and another country (FinnCham 2012c). The definition of a Chamber of commerce, Association or Guild varies from country to country, but in Finland only certain organizations can carry the name Chamber of Commerce. There are specific activities the organization must be able to carry out in order to be called a Chamber of Commerce and this is stated in the Finnish legislation. In some countries, like the USA, there is no legislation restricting the name. Usually, Trade Associations are slightly less formal than Chambers of Commerce but more formal than Trade Guilds. The latter can be regarded as purely an after work social club for networking. (Harma H-L. et al. 9 Feb. 2012.)

With all the Finnish Chambers of Commerce, Trade Associations and Trade Guilds under one brand, they can be easily associated with the FinnCham brand and ultimately Finland, giving them more credibility and accessibility for their clients. (Vuori, T. 2011.)

2.4 Benefits and challenges of the network currently

The network allows for better internationalization for companies because of its social networking nature. With this network, Finns around the world can recognize each other and even have a place to socialize, through informal events after work. Also, business opportunities could be better recognized. It would serve as the first Finnish contact for companies or associations when looking for information on internationalization. The members of the network can point out the right direction for the inquirer. (Harma H-L. et al. 9 Feb 2012.)

FinnCham cooperates with Finpro, which is an expert organization that provides specialist services against a fee for Finnish enterprises wishing to internationalize or expand abroad (Finpro 2012). The FinnCham network generally provides the same sort of services as Finpro, but not exactly, one being for example market analysis. FinnCham acts as the first contact to and from Finland. It is visioned that in each country of operation there would be a kind of “god father”, who would be the FinnCham contact and who could then be contacted if need be. (Harma H-L. et al. 9 Feb 2012.) This vision is discussed further in the Team Finland section of the thesis in chapter 2.5, which also clarifies the relationship between FinnCham and Finpro.

It is still slightly unclear what should be included in the services of FinnCham. This problem has its roots in the membership fees of the Trade Associations, through which they are financed. The services of these Trade Associations are exclusive and meant only for members. (Harma H-L. et al. 9 Feb 2012.)

The service issue rises under consideration, when the benefits of the FinnCham network are brought up. It would be ideal to have the different FinnCham events listed and written about, and also the services on hand for the users. This would make the

whole network more tangible and understandable for the audience and it would have a considerable impact on the FinnCham brand, as it would concretely showcase what the network consists of and how it benefits the members. However, because of the membership fees, this is an issue that must be thought through comprehensively. A solution could be that the events and services that are only for members would be listed and mentioned, but a small reminder that they are only for members would be present. This could actually have a positive impact on the number of members of these Associations, as people would see the services they are missing out on and this could possibly make them want to join. Whatever the solution, what FinnCham provides and does not, should be clearly mentioned on the website. (Harma H-L. et al. 9 Feb 2012.)

Currently, on the website, the network promises its members the Finland Chamber of Commerce's premises for use whenever they are visiting Helsinki and the premises are located in WTC Helsinki. However, this is practically impossible, as the meeting rooms are usually always booked for the Chamber's internal meetings and also, they aren't very large. However, the Chamber has a deal with Sodexo, which provides meeting room space in the building, that they can provide these premises to the member whenever they are free against payment. Another promise is that the network can provide speakers and ideas for conferences, seminars and other meetings along with organizing annual meetings in Helsinki. The FinnCham network also takes pride in being in close cooperation with Finpro, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Employment and the Economy. No other service promises are made, even though the network does more than this. Some examples include organizing trips to foreign markets and writing introductory articles on foreign markets and success stories of companies that made it in them. (FinnCham 2012c.)

2.5 Team Finland

In June 2011 the Finnish government set up an Action Plan on External Economic Relations. In this, the government composed an operative program to set up an external economic relations network that would extend beyond the boundaries of the administrative sectors. This would be called Team Finland. The administrative group behind the Team Finland has now been appointed by the Prime Minister of Finland, cur-

rently Jyrki Katainen, and will operate for the governance period of each Prime Minister. (Valtioneuvosto 2012.) The report is now ready and the program includes FinnCham, which will be made use of for its global network of Chambers, Associations and Guilds. FinnCham is not mentioned by name in the report, as the working group wanted to make it general enough to apply for all necessary groups. (Peltola, M-L. 18 June 2012.) However, now FinnCham is placed within a larger plan, giving it even more credibility and it will also guide FinnCham's operations in the long run.

According to the report, the target of the operative program is to support the employment development in Finland and to help the internationalization of SMEs. The key idea is a new network-like operative system, which will be called Team Finland. The need for this new network with more unified goals arises from the fact that different organizations operate independently with no sharing of knowledge and with no shared goals. This disables the ability of forecasting future business opportunities and trends and also makes networking troublesome. For the business customer, the amount of organizations helping in internationalization is vast, but actually finding the right kind of help is difficult. Now the plan is to appoint a contact person into every Finnish representative office globally, who shall be responsible for the service in that country or region. (Valtioneuvosto 2012b.)

The successful operations of this program require the realization of 6 ambitions, which are:

- 1) A strategic and a long-term approach.
- 2) A network enabling cooperation. (All the included organizations working in co-operation)
- 3) A customer oriented approach.
- 4) Ensuring a level playing field with competitor countries. (Guaranteeing equal operational conditions when compared to competing countries)
- 5) Ability to foresee changes and to map and utilize new opportunities.
- 6) Extensive and efficient exertion of influence. (Valtioneuvosto 2012c.)

In this way, FinnCham is being recognized as a valuable network for the Finnish economy. However, this thesis will focus on the internal stakeholders' expectations and needs of the network in order to make branding recommendations regarding the services of FinnCham and how it can better serve its customers.

3 Branding

Branding is important for companies because brands distinguish their products and services from competitors, and also portray an image of the company as a whole (Hart & Murphy 1998, 1-3). In this thesis, I will attempt to develop branding recommendations for a newly established network and therefore it is crucial to understand what a brand exactly is. I focused on how to create an umbrella brand for known organizations through enhancing the coordination of services and activities within the network.

3.1 What is a brand

Stephen King writes that a brand is everything intangible in a product or service that we buy and it is unique (in s.a. Ind 1997, 3). Aaker states that a brand is what links the products or services to the company or organization and differentiates the company from its competitors (1991, 7). According to Hart and Murphy it is the product or service, the packaging or the experience, the brand name, the promotion, the advertising and the general presentation that make up a brand (1998, 3).

Kapferer defines brand image, as the way the brand is perceived on the receiver's side. Brand identity is on the contrary how the company itself views the brand. Brand identity is therefore extremely important to understand, because only then can a company or organization send a strong image to the public. (2008, 174.) It is vital to understand the difference as failure to do so may lead to failure of the new brand that is being launched.

Brand identity is, according to Aaker, the associations the organization wants to preserve or construct. These associations stand for what the organization is all about and create a promise of what can be delivered to the consumer. They make up a value proposition by building a relationship between the consumer and the organization. The brand identity includes two dimensions; the core identity and the extended identity. The core dimension is the soul of the brand, never changing. However, once moving to different markets for example, the organization can adjust the extended identity.

(Aaker 1996, 68-69.) The brand image is the way the audience sees the organization currently, and therefore the two terms are quite different. (Aaker & Joachimsthaler 2000, 40.) In this thesis, the brand identity was of focus.

3.2 Brand identity traps

There are certain brand identity traps, four in total, that a brand designer must be aware of when designing a brand, and especially, while researching for it. They provide guidance into what a brand is and is not. The identity traps can lead to bad brand strategies and can limit the creativity involved in it. These traps include the brand image trap, the brand position trap, the external perspective trap and the product-attribute fixation trap. (Aaker 1996, 69-70.)

The brand image trap is about not analyzing the data retrieved from the brand image research. Instead, the brand image becomes the brand identity. However, this tends to happen only when the brand image is positive. Basically, what occurs in this situation is, that the organization lets the customers/interviewees dictate what the company stands for and who they are. There is no deep analysis done, as to what the essence of the organization is. There should be a strategy set for the brand, and it should be forward-looking. If the brand image is merely adopted as the brand identity, then this will not occur. (Aaker 1996, 70.)

The brand position trap takes place when an organization confuses the brand position with brand identity, because it tries to find what the marketers should communicate to the audience about the brand. The brand position is, by definition of Aaker, the part of the brand identity and the value proposition that should be communicated to the audience. Usually, in cases where this occurs, the only aspects that are focused on are the product/service qualities, and no attention is paid to the brand personality and organizational associations. The outcome of the brand position trap is simply an advertizing tagline, and consequently, the organization will lack a brand identity. (Aaker 1996, 71.)

It is important for the internal stakeholders of any organization to know what the firm stands for. This can only happen if the organization has a brand identity and that this

identity has been communicated to the employees. However, in the external perspective trap this does not occur. This is because, if an organization falls into this trap, it does not see the value a brand identity provides for the internal stakeholders and therefore for the entire company. They see the brand identity as something that will increase sales, because of customers relating to the identity of the brand, and not as something that can assist in helping the organization understand itself, the values, what it stands for etc. (Aaker 1996, 72.)

The last brand identity trap is the product-attribute fixation trap. In this, the organization focuses only on the product attributes and tries to build the brand identity based on them thinking that the product attributes are the only basis for customer buying decisions. (Aaker 1996, 73-74.)

In order for the organization to avoid these brand identity traps, it should consider the brand from a wider perspective. The Brand Identity Planning model in chapter 3.4 provides a more thorough tool for brand analysis. In brief, the model circles around the brand identity system which has an outcome of either a value proposition for the customer or credibility to other brands, but all in all the goal is to build a brand-customer relationship. In FinnCham's case, the model should provide both a value proposition and credibility, because it is an umbrella brand. The result overall should be a good brand-customer relationship. (Aaker 1996, 76-77.)

3.3 Difficulties in launching new brands

According to Murphy, approximately seventeen out of twenty new brands fail. This can be a result of bad luck, poor planning, poor distribution, product problems or management problems. The most common failing point is however that the new brand does not provide the consumer or user anything differentiated and of value. In other words, there is no reason for the consumer of the brand to actually consume, trust and use the brand. Unfortunately, it is also advised to imitate a market leader's brand attributes, because they are something that the consumer trusts and appreciates. With this said, a new brand needs to obtain some characteristics from a current successful brand and twist it up with unique traits. (Murphy s.a. in Hart & Murphy 1998, 10.)

It is also said that consumers find it hard to think outside of the current brand box and therefore it is easier to imitate traits from existing brands. Coming up with something completely new can be very risky because consumers may feel alienated from a brand that is too different. However, a completely new brand can also be fruitful, as it clearly displays distinctiveness. (Murphy s.a. in Hart & Murphy 1998, 10-12.). A balance between these two is consequently needed.

3.4 Corporate branding

Strong corporate brands enable attraction of employees, stakeholders and partners. They also have a positive effect on the public, making them more sympathetic towards the company, giving it more credibility and making it less vulnerable in times of distress. Developing a strong corporate brand however, is not easily done. This is because companies and organizations can be very complex, such as in the case of the FinnCham network, which consists of various Finnish Chambers of Commerce, bilateral Finnish Chambers of Commerce, Trade Associations and Guilds globally, with various different services and products. This also makes it more demanding to communicate the value proposition of the brand. (Mottram s.a. in Hart & Murphy 1998, 64.)

Mottram writes that there are three different possibilities in constructing a brand. These options are a monolithic structure, endorsed brand architecture and a hybrid structure. In the monolithic structure all the products and services are branded under the same brand and set of values. In the endorsed brand architecture the higher corporate brand is linked to the various different product and service brands. In the hybrid structure, the company decides on a combination of the two earlier mentioned. (in s.a. Hart & Murphy 1998, 65-66.) In the case of the FinnCham network, the most suitable option is the endorsed brand architecture. This endorsed method would add credibility and a competitive advantage to the positioning of its products and services. Mottram refers to this option as a kind of an umbrella brand (in s.a. Hart & Murphy 1998, 65-66.), which is what the FinnCham is practice.

Aaker writes about sub-brands and master brands. For the FinnCham network, the master brand would be the FinnCham brand and the sub-brands would be the independent brands of the Chambers of Commerce, Trade Associations and Trade Guilds. Sub-brands can take the master brand into places where it could not go on its own, but with the associations of the sub-brands, the master brand can extend and become more convincing and competitive. However, because of the close association between the master brand and the sub-brands, there exists a risk of the master brand being placed in bad light. On the other hand, there also exists a chance for an opportunity of the master brand being placed in good light because of the associations of the sub-brands. (Aaker & Joachimsthaler 2000, 115.)

All in all, good brand architecture should increase the brands visibility and create synergy. Also, it clarifies the product or service offering for the customers and the employees and makes the brand identity clear for all internal stakeholders. (Aaker 2000 & Joachimsthaler, 153; Ind 2007, 21.)

3.5 Brand Identity Planning Model

Aaker and Joachimsthaler state that when developing a brand identity, an analysis of the customers, competitors and the company's overall strategy needs to be carried out in order to fully understand what the needs and the conditions that the three above mentioned aspects pose upon the brand (2000, 13). In this thesis, the researcher will focus on the internal stakeholders' needs and expectations on the brand and through these, a value proposition can be designed. Through the data obtained from the interviews, information on the motivations of the internal stakeholders will be understood, through which the brand can be built upon. Also, the brand development needs to reflect FinnCham's organizational strategy, so the branding recommendations need to be in line with them. (Aaker & Joachimsthaler 2000, 13.)

Aaker's Brand Identity Planning Model emphasizes the importance of customer insight, but in FinnCham's case, the insight is gathered from the internal stakeholders, which can be observed in the figure below.

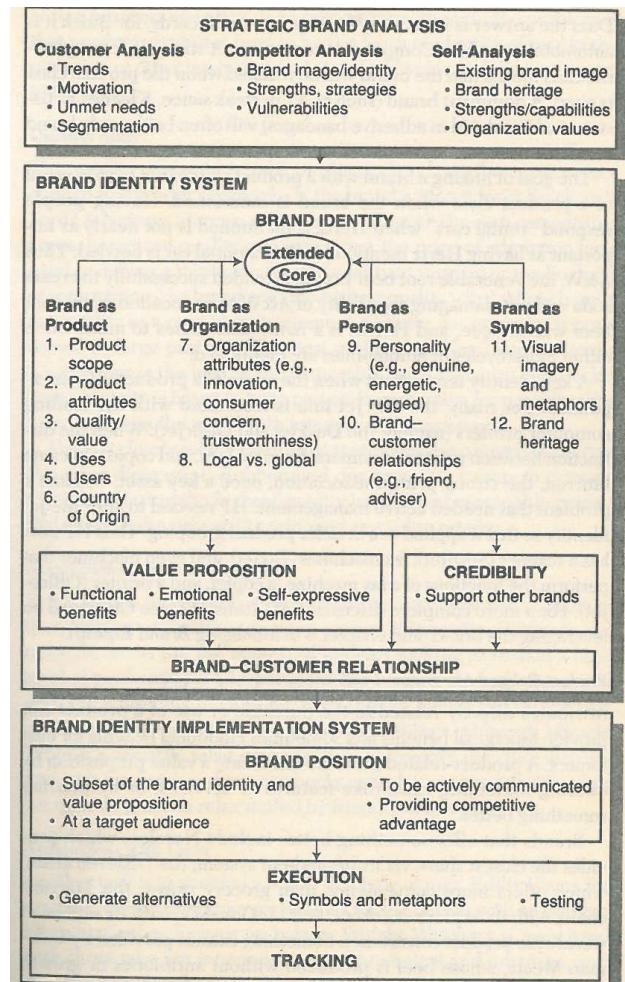


Figure 1. Brand Identity Planning Model (Aaker 1996, 79)

The model above, which is figure 1, places the brand identity in the middle of the brand planning, which has to be analyzed in various ways in order to get the value for the customer or in FinnCham's case, the internal stakeholders' in the form of a value proposition, which can provide functional, emotional or self-expressive benefits for the customer/ internal stakeholder. This creates the relationship between the brand identity and the customer. The model also depicts how the brand identity provides credibility for the organization as another outcome and therefore also builds the brand-customer relationship. The model also goes on to depict how this can be implemented, executed and tracked. (Aaker & Joachimsthaler 2000, 40; Aaker 1996, 79.) However, this thesis focuses on the planning part of the brand and the implementation and execution of the brand will be but touched through some recommendations in the Discussion part of the thesis.

The model in figure 1 begins with the strategic brand analysis that includes a customer analysis, a competitor analysis and a self-analysis. This thesis focused on the customer analysis part in developing branding recommendations for the FinnCham network. The internal stakeholders are considered the customers in the thesis, as the brand will serve them and the researcher is attempting to build branding recommendations based on the internal stakeholders' expectations and needs. The customer analysis part requires the organization to research deeply into what motivates the customer and what their unmet needs are. Segmentation is needed in order to comprehend the size and the characteristics of each segment (Aaker & Joachimsthaler 2000, 41). For this thesis, the researcher segmented the internal stakeholders based on the size and influence which means the status of the Chamber of Commerce, Association or Guild and the location be it in Finland or abroad of each segment and conducted the interviews for each segment.

After the strategic brand analysis has been carried out, the organization needs to analyze the brand identity in terms of the core identity and the extended identity. The core identity is the essence of the brand and it is highly rare to alter it. However, it is possible to modify the brand to fit certain times or places/markets by changing the extended identity. This happens through analyzing the Brand as a product, an Organization, a Person and as a Symbol, and what the different associations are which come with each. Aaker however states that not all brands need to possess each of these "perspectives", as he calls them. (Aaker 1996, 79.)

Since the FinnCham network does not provide its customers with products, but rather services, the first perspective, Brand as a product, cannot be analyzed. Therefore, I moved directly move onto the Brand as organization perspective. According to Aaker, it is essential to consider organizational associations when developing corporate brands, because a corporate brand represents the entire organization including its services, employees and values. Also, the organizational associations can be linked to all the services the organization under a certain brand provides, which increases visibility but also poses a risk. (Aaker 1996, 116-117.) In FinnCham's case, this means that having all the bilateral Chambers of Commerce, Finnish Chambers of Commerce, Associa-

tions and Guilds under the FinnCham brand ensures greater visibility and recognition for the brand, but also poses a risk for all the members of the network. This is due to the fact that if one representative of the network were to provide poor services or mistreat a customer, the incident would shine bad light on the entire network. Thus, it is important to communicate to the entire network what it is, that FinnCham should represent and to build this on the expectations and needs of the members of the network.

Organizational associations are quite abstract in nature, especially compared to straight-to-the-point product associations. However, they provide a different kind of advantage; customers can associate different assets, skills and values to the entire organization, labeling the organization and not just the products or services it provides. By linking certain associations to an entire organization, or in FinnCham's case, the network, all its services will be associated in the same way, giving it more credibility and building a customer relationship between the customer and the entire network and ultimately making the concept of an umbrella brand work. Also, Aaker (1996, 118 & 136) affirms that when an organization wants to launch an umbrella brand, organizational associations are recommended in the brand identity planning.

One aspect to look at is whether the organization wants to be perceived as a global or a local brand. Both have their advantages, but due to the unique nature of the FinnCham brand, it has to be considered as both global and local. A global brand is regarded as prestigious with a long-term mission and influence. They are recognized worldwide and seen as brands that invest in the future and can compete in the international markets. A local brand however is closer to the local markets and can seem warmer in the eyes of the customer. (Aaker 1996, 128-130; Aaker 2004, 9.) Overall, FinnCham should be a global brand, but the assets it possesses; the Finnish Chambers of Commerce, the bilateral Chambers, Associations and Guilds, places it in various local markets with each having market-specific knowledge and sensitivity. This makes FinnCham both a global and local brand.

Aaker states that organizational associations benefit a company in three ways; they ultimately help to create a value proposition or a customer relationship, provide credibility to the other brands within the umbrella brand which are the individual brands of the Chambers, Associations and Guilds and they also assist in helping managers and employees understand the internal culture of the organization and what it stands for. These three points prove how the organizational associations help in building the brand identity. (Aaker 1996, 130-131.) Understanding the internal culture is vital in creating the brand identity. This is because the managers need to communicate the brand to the internal stakeholders so that they know and act by it in order for the organization to operate by the strategy set, because the internal stakeholders play a huge role in building the identity. An example of this is the fact that the internal stakeholders/employees of the organization communicate the brand to the customers by the way they behave in their roles (Aaker 2004, 11). Understanding the internal culture is important also for the fact that it is also easier to “sell” the brand identity to the internal stakeholders if they agree with what it “sold” to them. Aaker says that if a brand identity includes organizational associations it is more likely to include the actual essence of the organization; the values, strategies etc. If the internal stakeholders understand the brand identity, they will also understand why the organization exists for example, why the FinnCham brand was launched, what is considered important within the organization and what the future plans are. (Aaker 1996, 135.)

Next, I continued to the Brand as Person approach. This approach analyses the brand in terms of personality. Aaker defines brand personality as the set of human characteristics associated with a given brand. These include age, gender, its socioeconomic class, and the personality traits e.g. humor, warmth, concern etc. (Aaker 1996, 141.) Aaker writes about a study conducted that resulted in five major brand personalities that can be used to clarify the differences between all brands. These are sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication and ruggedness. Out of these, sincerity seemed to be the most popular trait that almost all organizations aspired to. It is also the trait that most customers admire the most. The sincerity trait included a positive load to it, which made the brand seem warmer and trustworthy. Many brands have actually included sincerity in their core identities because of this fact. A company could use this sincerity

trait to emphasize its heritage, which could be for example a long history of the organization, which in turn ensures professionalism. (Aaker 2004, 7; Aaker 1996, 144-145.) FinnCham could use its hundreds of years of Chamber of Commerce history as an emphasis in its Brand as Person associations, and include it in its core identity. It could be a sort of brand promise, a promise of good and professional service due to the long experience in the field.

Other characteristics can affect the brand personality as well, like the organization's country of origin, the age of the organization and the colors it uses in advertizing and in branding (Aaker 1996, 146). The brand personality aspect in branding is interesting, as it provides very insightful features as to what the customers and in this thesis' case, the internal stakeholders may think of the brand and what they would prefer it to be like. Aaker in fact says, that the insight from the brand personality and the adjectives found could offer the branding designers texture, as Aaker calls it, for the brand building. (Aaker 1996, 150-151.) All in all, the brand personality is useful, because it can serve as a basis for the brand identity and it is difficult to copy (Aaker 1996, 174). I therefore used the Brand as Person approach in the questions I asked from the interviewees in the thesis to help build recommendations for the core and extended identity, by receiving unique descriptions of the brand personality.

The Brand as Symbol approach is not very useful for the purposes of this thesis, as I demarcated the research area so that the visual aspects are not considered, as the marketers of the FinnCham organization design them.

According to the theories of Aaker, the brand identity should provide a value proposition to the customer. A value proposition, by definition of Aaker is the combination of the functional, emotional and self-expressive benefits a brand can deliver to the customer. It is a promise of the value the customer can receive by using the brand. It also promotes the brand-customer relationship. (Aaker 1996, 95.)

In order to better understand the concept of a value proposition, the three above-mentioned benefits need to be explained. Firstly, let's look at the functional benefits a

value proposition should provide. These benefits have to do with the product/service qualities/experiences. They describe the benefits of the usage of the products or the positive experiences of using the service. The goal is to provide a functional benefit that will differentiate the brand from competitors, but be attractive to the customers. It is worth mentioning however, that in this category, there lies a risk of the product-attribute fixation trap, which is not desirable. The functional benefit presumes that the customer is a rational decision-maker which means that the customer would systematically weigh different options and finally base the decision on facts and rational thinking (Aaker 1996, 96; BusinessDictionary 2012). Also the benefit poses risks of copying, as the product attributes are the easiest to copy and may lack differentiating qualities. Possible ways to combat the limitations, that this benefit poses, is to broaden the brand identity to include the brand as organization, person and symbol perspectives. (Aaker 1996, 96.)

Secondly, the emotional benefits need to be analyzed. According to Aaker, the good feeling a customer gets from the usage of a brand is the emotional benefit of a brand. This feeling could be for example safety, excitement, strength or control. The emotional benefit adds depth to the brand, but it may not be enough as a benefit on its own. If one wants to make the brand even more desirable, then Aaker advises the organization to combine emotional and functional benefits. When creating a brand, one should ask questions like “how does using this brand make you feel?” and “How do you feel, when the functional benefit of the brand is attained?”. (Aaker 1996, 97.) One hypothesis for the combined emotional and functional benefit of the FinnCham brand is that a member of the network is not alone. This is explained by the fact that in the network, the member receives advice from the other members and through the specialists invited to the events. Also the services provided by the network for free are extremely useful. Through these services the member feels like they are not alone in the internationalization process of the organization.

Thirdly, a brand, through its value proposition can provide self-expressive benefits for the customer. What this means is that a brand can provide a vehicle through which users can express themselves, their personalities or how they see themselves. In prac-

tice, this happens through buying and using the brand. For example, a person may feel fashionable by purchasing clothes from a fashionable store. The self-expressive benefit has a focus on the users themselves and is future-oriented, rather than the past. Also, the user wants through the self-expressive benefit to communicate something to the public. (Aaker 1996, 99-101.)

For FinnCham, it would be ideal for the brand creators to focus on the functional and emotional benefits combined, as the brand does provide actual concrete help and guidance, but it also provides a sense of belonging and safety. This of course, was a presumption, which needed to be proven in the interviews of this thesis.

A brand can also provide other brands credibility, like in the case of FinnCham (Aaker 1996, 103). It will provide the individual brands of the different Chambers of Commerce, Trade Associations and Trade Guilds credibility by belonging to a bigger picture. What has to be thought of therefore is whether FinnCham needs a value proposition, as was earlier discussed.

When building a brand-customer relationship, a value proposition is not necessarily needed. At times, in some companies' cases the brand-customer relationship can sprout from the actual brand identity. This means that the customer feels like they are somehow emotionally attached to the brand and therefore no value proposition is needed or if one exists, it would be ineffective. Aaker teaches that this can occur especially when the brand is deemed as organization or person and not as a product (Aaker 1996, 103.), which is FinnCham's case. It may therefore be more useful for FinnCham to build the brand-customer relationship directly from the brand identity, and not through a value proposition. This especially, since FinnCham is such a versatile brand and organization, not providing any certain services or products from all of its sub-brands, but it more being an associative brand, providing credibility and security for its sub-brands. However, this should not be blindly accepted, as the empirical part of the thesis revealed if there is any emotional attachment to the brand. If none exists, it would be useful to provide a value proposition with the benefits it brings.

After the brand identity has been defined and understood, the brand positioning can take place. The brand position is, as Aaker defines it, the part of the brand identity and the value proposition that should be actively communicated to the target audience. (Aaker & Joachimsthaler 2000, 41.) This is part of the outcome of the research, and will be discussed further in the Discussion part later on of the thesis. It is based on the data attained from the interviews and questionnaire. Once the brand position is defined, brand-building programs, which are the last part of the Brand Identity Planning Model, can take place (Aaker & Joachimsthaler 2000, 42). This however, is out of the scope of the thesis, and can be implemented based on the recommendations set by the thesis. This all said, Aaker also asserts that even though these actions are placed in the Brand Identity Planning Model in a manner that they come one after another, they can also overlap and even change places in actual implementation. This is due to the fact that sometimes, it is required to carry out an action and see whether it works or not and modify the strategy on the go. (Aaker & Joachimsthaler 2000, 42.)

3.6 Importance of research in launching new brands

As was affirmed by Ind above, research into the internal stakeholders is highly important when launching new brands. Campbell goes on to identify three central points to consider when developing a new brand. These are: understanding the target consumer, differentiators of the new brand in comparison to competition and developing something realistic and understandable for the consumers to grab onto while researching. In order to achieve these three points, research needs to be conducted to reveal what they would be and the consumers can be thought of as the internal stakeholder, from which information is sought. (in s.a. Hart & Murphy 1998, 58.)

The first point has to do with the consumer and their attributes. What drives, motivates and dissatisfies the consumer in terms of existing brands and what are their needs and wants. Campbell suggests exploratory qualitative research, such as in-depth interviews with the target market to find solutions to these questions. (in s.a. Hart & Murphy 1998, 59.)

The second point is rather evident, but for clarification, it means that researchers must find out how to differentiate the brand from the competition. The final point is about making the research questions for example understandable and clear enough for the market; in other words, it is advisable to avoid jargon. (Campbell s.a. in Hart & Murphy 1998, 59.)

These points give good advice for me to develop valid guiding questions for the in-depth interviews.

3.7 How to communicate a brand?

According to an advertizing strategist, Lynn Upshaw, the internal stakeholders need to be able to answer what the brand stands for and also care about what it stands for. This is called the internal brand image and in order for them to know and care about the brand identity, the internal brand image needs to be established. However, this cannot be, if the designed brand identity is not communicated to them or at least it can vary greatly from the designed brand identity. Therefore, the brand identity needs to be communicated to the internal stakeholders once it has been defined, because each internal stakeholder has to be on the same page in terms of what the brand of the organization is and only after the brand identity is in check, can the brand image be constructed. (Upshaw in Aaker & Joachimsthaler 2000, 87- 89; Ind 2007, 24.)

Aaker and Joachimsthaler (2000, 89) write of different methods of communicating the brand identity, which are videos, books, manuals, presentations or workshops/home study materials. Whichever method is chosen, it needs to thoroughly uncover what was designed as the brand and ensure each internal stakeholder comprehends and embraces it.

If a video is chosen as a medium to communicate the brand, then one needs to consider what it should contain. The video could be just a visual collage of images and colors related to the brand or an informative ensemble with employees of the company as speakers explaining for example the heritage and missions of the organization. (Aaker & Joachimsthaler 2000, 90.)

A book is another method to communicate the brand. It can include descriptions of what brand stands for and explanations on how to actually be what the brand stands for. Also visuals in the form of pictures can emphasize this. A step further from a book is a brand manual, which communicates the brand and how to get there through concrete instructions for the employees. The concrete instructions on the amount of autonomy managers have can be included as well as how the logo should and should not be presented. Also explanations of the target market, brand identity, brand associations et cetera can be explained. Aaker also states that the manual needs to leave room for brand improvements, especially if the brand has not yet proven to be all it is hoped to be. (Aaker & Joachimsthaler 2000, 92.)

In presentations, the speakers can utilize short stories created to explain what the organization does, strives to be and has been. This is an interesting and effective way for the listener to understand the brand. When the brand identity communication is directed only at internal stakeholders, the organization can provide home study materials for the employees and afterwards be tested on it to ensure each internal stakeholder understands the brand. (Aaker & Joachimsthaler 2000, 93.)

However, the above-mentioned methods by Aaker and Joachimsthaler to communicate the brand to the internal stakeholders can seem outdated, as technological advances have taken place in communications. Especially the book approach seems outdated, as these days employees are busy with all type of information impelled on them. Therefore, it may be that no time or interest toward reading a book about the organization's brand identity exists. More involving methods of communicating the brand to the internal stakeholders is written by Ind (1997, 92) when he writes about three forms

of communication that need to be considered when communicating the brand to the internal stakeholders.

First he states that employee research needs to be carried out in order to understand what the current perception on the brand is amongst the internal stakeholders. Once this is known, the organizations can design the communication through three forms of communication to fit the needs of the employees through informing and motivating. (Ind 1997, 92.)

The first form of communication is communicating to all employees through internal newsletters and memos; mass communication. Usually, this form of communication is regarded as “anybody can do this”, because it is so everyday in an organization’s routines, as Ind puts it. However, special attention needs to be paid to the language and style of this communication form, as it needs to be consistent with the strategy of the organization and shouldn’t reveal any personal preconceptions. Also, any external campaigns on the brand should be first explained to the internal stakeholders, so that they’d understand it completely and consequently support it with their communication with external stakeholders e.g. customers of the organization. (Ind 1997, 92-93.)

The second form of communication has to do with segmenting the internal stakeholders according to interest, and tailoring a message to serve the different needs of each segment. This is done to ensure that irrelevant messages aren’t being sent to some segments, and therefore the mass communications needs to be checked. (Ind 1997, 93.)

One-to-one interaction is the third form of communication. This occurs in everyday communication between internal stakeholders through for example meetings and telephone calls. This is what really tests the brand, as this is difficult to control. The need is therefore to drive the brand into the culture of the organization so it becomes the norm in behavior of employees. (Ind 1997, 94.)

3.8 Current use of social media by FinnCham

FinnCham headquarters, Finland Chamber of Commerce currently also uses social media as a communication channel. Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn are used, and in LinkedIn, there are subgroups of FinnCham called FinnCham Asia, FinnCham China and FinnCham Russia. It has become a routine for FinnCham to publish positive news about Finnish companies everyday on the social media platforms, and if the news touches Asia, China or Russia, then it is also added to the above-mentioned subgroups. Therefore, with the experience in social media, FinnCham should utilize it as a channel in communicating the defined brand identity to the public but also to the internal stakeholders.

4 Stakeholders and their expectations

Stakeholder theories need to be looked into, in order to determine which internal stakeholders to interview, how good and effective communication should be implemented and how a well-functioning network works.

A stakeholder is an individual or a group that desires some value created from the company's produce or that possesses some sort of interest in the company's existence (Donaldson & Preston 1995 in Bonnafous-Boucher & Pesqueux 2005, 106). Another definition by Freeman (1984, in Bonnafous-Boucher & Pesqueux 2005, 40) is that a stakeholder is "any group or individual able to affect, or who is affected by, the realisation of an organisation's goals". There are internal and external stakeholders, and as the name suggests, the internal stakeholders are the members or employees of a company/organization at hand and the external stakeholders are individuals or organizations outside of the company that have an interest in or are influenced by the company (Johnson, Whittington & Scholes 2011, 139).

The strategy of a company can be very much influenced by the expectations of the stakeholders and for the purposes of this thesis, the strategy can be thought of as the brand strategy. There are a variety of different stakeholders with different expectations and power to influence managers in designing the brand strategy. Stakeholders include for example owners, customers, managers, unions, employees, the government, suppliers and competitors, as stated by Freeman (1984, in Bonnafous-Boucher & Pesqueux 2005, 67; Johnson et al. 2011, 140). The key issue is to figure out who are the stakeholders the brand designers should listen to primarily? One way to accomplish this is through stakeholder mapping. (Johnson et al. 2011, 139-140.) However, in this thesis, only internal stakeholders are considered.

4.1 Stakeholder mapping

In stakeholders mapping, I attempted to understand each stakeholder's interest in influencing the strategy of the company and the power it has to do so. This is depicted in the Figure 2 below.

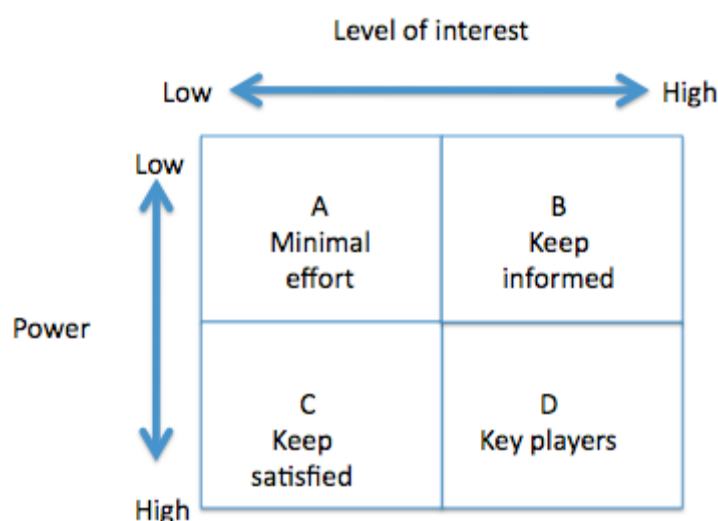


Figure 2. Stakeholder mapping: the power/interest matrix by Mendelow (Modified from Mendelow 1986, in Johnson et al. 2011, 142).

As one can understand from the Figure 2, the stakeholders with the highest power and interest level toward the company are the key players and should be listened to primarily when designing the brand (Johnson et al. 2011, 142). I therefore needed to segment the internal stakeholders of the FinnCham network in order to find out the key players and thus, the interviewees. Despite of this, Johnson, Scholes and Whittington also state that respect needs to be paid to the organizational culture, as some organizations value different aspects in the stakeholders, as the matrix above would conclude. For example some organizations value financial influence more than the stakeholder's actual interest towards the brand strategy of the organization. (2011, 142.) Therefore, I needed to consult the FinnCham organization of their opinion on the best-suited internal stakeholders to interview, and not rely solely on this matrix. More on this is discussed in chapter 5, Research design.

4.2 Stakeholder cooperation

In order for the entire network to fully receive and understand the new brand, working cooperation needs to exist within the network. As to how this should be done in practice can be concluded from theories on stakeholder relations inside a network. Also recommendations for future stakeholder interactions under an umbrella brand can be deduced from these theories.

According to Yamak (2005, in Bonnafous-Boucher & Pesqueux 2005, 80) Chambers of Commerce tend to be involved in sharing of information and practices and take collective action. This is the case of the FinnCham network, as it is a Chambers of Commerce, Trade Associations and Trade Guilds network and this procedure is something the network should strive for in terms of cooperation amongst the internal stakeholders.

Antonacopoulou and Meric propose that stakeholder relations should be thought of not only through power relations, as was suggested in Mendelow's stakeholder mapping, but as a means to exchange knowledge and in this manner, create a well functioning and long-living network of stakeholders (2005, in Bonnafous-Boucher & Pesqueux 2005, 126). This proposal supports Yamak's statement on Chambers of Commerce, and we can therefore conclude that a well functioning network of Chambers of Commerce is one where information is shared for the common interest (read: the interest of Finnish companies in their efforts to internationalize as well as foreign companies wishing to enter the Finnish market).

The knowledge gained by one stakeholder should be distributed to all members of the network and knowledge can be created through networking or by the stakeholder's simple existence. The reason why an internal stakeholder simply by existing adds to the organization's knowledge is that the organization is still aware of this stakeholder and the awareness of the stakeholder completes the picture of the company has of itself (Antonacopoulou & Meric 2005, in Bonnafous-Boucher & Pesqueux 2005, 135). This can occur because interactions amongst the stakeholders add knowledge to the organization's cognitive dimension, like for example networking, even if it is unplanned. Also

Ind states that utilization of each employee's knowledge adds to the value and competitive advantage to an organization (Ind 2007, 43). This networking creates lively and interdependent interactions and connections between the stakeholders, which result in a well-functioning network, as was stated by Antonacopoulou and Meric (2005, in Bonnafous-Boucher & Pesqueux 2005, 136).

Through understanding the importance of sharing knowledge within a network, I can make conclusions on how services should be handled. All members should be aware of each member's services provided and a functioning means to share information with one another should be implemented in order for the FinnCham network to best serve its clients and for every member to truly understand the brand (Ind 2007, 45).

4.3 Summary of theory

A summary of the theory is provided here, so that it can be reflected on in the discussion in relation to the results obtained from the empirical research. Only the most relevant issues in terms of this thesis from the theory are mentioned, so as to make the analysis of the results in chapter 7 clearer.

Aaker's Brand Identity Planning Model provides a good starting point for the summary. It emphasizes customer insight through means of customer analysis, or in this thesis' case, the internal stakeholders', who are the "customers" of the brand. The analysis needs to include customer segmentation, the motivations for the customers and the needs they have, all of which will be extracted from the empirical research.

The Brand Identity Planning Model places the brand identity in the middle of the analysis and explains that there are two dimensions of the identity, the core and the extended identity. The core identity is the essence of the brand, while the extended identity can be modified to fit certain needs. In order to build texture for the brand and to make it more interesting and also to avoid the brand position trap, the identity needs to be analyzed through different associations and in this thesis, the most relevant associations are Brand as organization and Brand as Person. Once these two attributes

have been analyzed and drafted from the interviews, they can be used to design the brand identity.

From analysis of the core and extended identity, a value proposition and/ or credibility can be established for the brand. The value proposition should provide in FinnCham's case, functional and emotional benefits. From the interviews, I can conclude whether an emotional connection exists between the customers or in FinnCham's case, the internal stakeholders and the brand or not. If an emotional connection exists, the brand does not need a value proposition, but only a provision of credibility. However, if none exists, then a value proposition is needed with the benefits mentioned earlier. This will help in building the brand-customer relationship.

Once the brand identity is figured out, brand architecture needs to be designed. There are two theorists, from whom to gather this information. Aaker speaks of master brands and sub-brands, in which FinnCham would be the master brand and the sub-brands would be the global offices. Mottram provides three options for FinnCham, which are the endorsed, monolithic and hybrid brand architecture. In the endorsed option, a higher corporate brand is linked to various brands under it and in the monolithic option all products and services are branded under the same name i.e. all FinnCham organizations would be named FinnCham and not their original names. The hybrid option is a combination of the two.

Once all of the above is figured out, the brand designers need to decide on how to communicate the brand to the internal stakeholders. This can be done in three forms according to Ind, which are mass, segmented and one-to-one communications. The methods would be for example through newsletters, targeted communication and through telephones or meetings, respectively.

Stakeholder theories were also looked into in order to determine how to select the interviewees and other respondents for the empirical part and also to clarify how well performing networks function and how cooperation between the internal stakeholders should be carried out. Mendelow's stakeholder mapping provided a basis for selecting

respondents through their levels of interest and power in the brand. However, power relations are not the only element to look for in within the network, but the possibility of sharing knowledge and information. A way in which knowledge can be shared and distributed should be implemented in order for the network to flourish, because each stakeholder's knowledge adds to the network's cognitive dimension. It is just a matter of unveiling this knowledge.

5 Research design

This thesis is constructed of secondary and primary researches, which are used to gather sufficient information in order to build the branding recommendations for the FinnCham network. The secondary data was gathered from several theory books on branding and stakeholders. For the primary research part of the thesis, I used a qualitative research method in attempts to finding a solution to the research problem by interviewing and questionnaireing the internal stakeholders of the FinnCham network.

I found the qualitative method to be more appropriate than the quantitative method, as not much is known about the question at hand. In the quantitative method, one would try to find out details on the researched topic or/and the effect of variable X on variable Y. This implies that the topic is somewhat known, as it is possible to go in such depth. In the qualitative method more emphasis is put on people's understandings and opinions on different topics or issues. (Silvermann 2005, 9.)

According to Malhotra, qualitative research is in an exploratory research method, which is unstructured and probes a small sample, rather than a large one, which means the amount of respondents, and attempts to find insight into a matter that is not well known (2010, 73). Exploratory research suggests that the research is flexible, more unstructured than structured and the sample is non-representative, which means it does not represent the entire population at hand. It does not provide conclusive findings, meaning the outcome of the research does not provide certain truths, but insights into a matter. (Malhotra 2010, 103-104.)

Also, Silverman points out that through the qualitative method, a deeper understanding of the topic can be achieved, because a respondent's, which is a person who answers questions in a research, be it a questionnaire or interview, own perspectives on a matter are captured, which further provides arguments for using the qualitative method (2005, 9.) The exploratory method and a qualitative research design is suitable for research in need of exploration of something unknown and because the this thesis attempts to

find out what the internal stakeholders' opinions and needs on the FinnCham brand are, then the qualitative method is best fit.

5.1 Methods

Now that it has been decided to use the qualitative method, it is time to further look into what it consists of. According to Tesch, there are four main groups of qualitative research, which are the (1) characteristics of language, (2) the discovery of regularities, (3) the comprehension of the meaning of texts or action and (4) reflection. I focused on the second group, which includes discovering of regularities in which the researcher searches for elements to be categorized together and recognizes patterns. (Tesch 1990, 78.)

I gathered the data using two methods; standardized open-ended questions through telephone interviews and also by sending the same questions to the entire population in order to receive a full and complete picture of the data. A population, according to Malhotra, is all the possible respondents, who share same characteristics (2010, 370). In the case of this thesis the population is the 77 bilateral Chambers of Commerce, Trade Associations and Trade Guilds, as well as the 15 bilateral Trade Associations within Finland. In the first method, I asked all respondents identical questions, but worded them in an open-ended way, so that the respondents could answer the questions so that their true and complete opinions, experiences and insights into the matter were retrieved. (Turner 2010, 756.)

Due to the geographical disparity of the intended respondents, I did not conduct the interviews face-to-face, but via telephone. As earlier mentioned, the questions were distributed via e-mail to the entire population, but a different cover letter (see Attachments 1 & 2) was attached to the telephone interview candidates. The reason as to why I also sent the questions to the FinnCham members who were not asked to participate in a telephone interview, is that they would have an opportunity to participate as well and to ensure that enough valuable data was gathered.

Malhotra writes that open-ended questions are not suitable for e-mail distribution, as people tend to write more briefly than they speak (2010, 343). However, the positive side to e-mailing is that it presents a quick and easy way to conduct follow up questions as well, so in cases where the respondents may seem to answer too briefly, I could follow up with a question that probed a more in-depth answer. Also, since the qualitative exploratory research method allows for flexible ways to conduct the research, it is possible for me to conduct the study in this way.

Next I needed to determine the sample size (Malhotra 2010, 374) of the telephone interviews, i.e. how many interviewees I wanted to obtain. As was stated above according to Malhotra, the qualitative research method usually includes only a small sample. Therefore and in cooperation with the commissioning organization, FinnCham, the researcher decided to interview via telephone, 6 respondents. From these 6 respondents that researcher attempted to receive in depth insight as to what the needs and expectations of the internal stakeholders of the FinnCham brand were.

For the second part of the data gathering, the e-mail distributed questions, the interview questions were sent also to all contact people of the 77 bilateral Chambers of Commerce, Trade Associations and Trade Guild globally, as well as the 15 bilateral Trade Association working within Finland. This was done to guarantee enough data and to receive a good depiction of the internal stakeholders' expectations and needs on the FinnCham brand.

The questions were checked with FinnCham personnel, to serve as a pretesting of the questions. In this way, I confirmed the appropriateness of the questions and eradicated any problems to do with the questions (Malhotra 2010, 354.)

As an incentive for the respondents to participate in the study, I promised the respondents the results of the study. In this way, the respondents felt motivated to answer because they would be getting something out of participating and they will not have just been using up their valuable time. This served the purpose of overcoming the unwillingness to respond to the study (Malhotra 2010, 342.)

According to FinnCham's websites, there are 77 bilateral Chambers of Commerce, Trade Associations and Trade Guilds globally (Kauppakamari 2012b). I needed to pick 6 of these organizations to interview via telephone for this thesis. I used judgmental sampling, which is a form of nonprobability sampling. This means that I decided who was the most appropriate for interviewing purposes and therefore I picked the interviewees (Malhotra 2010, 379). For the purposes of this thesis, it was logical to choose organizations, which reside in countries that are most important and promising for Finnish trade (import and export). They were chosen based on a study based on the Finnish Customs' statistics (Tulli 2012) that I conducted for FinnCham in May 2012. Since I promised the interviewees anonymity, I cannot reveal which countries were chosen, as some countries only have one or a few Chambers of Commerce, Associations or Guilds, and it may be possible to deduce the respondents from the countries mentioned.

In some of the countries, there are multiple Chambers of Commerce, Trade Associations or Guilds to choose from, so I needed to identify from which to pick the interviewees from. This was done in cooperation with FinnCham and the respondent candidates were chosen from the register of contact people that the FinnCham headquarter keeps, which mostly constitutes of the chairmen, presidents or managers of the organizations. This assured credibility in the answers of the respondents, as they know their organizations throughout and have experience in working there.

The telephone interviews were not recorded, but instead I wrote down notes on the main points stated by the respondents. This was done, so that the respondents trusted in the promise that the interviews were anonymous and so that no one else would be able to listen to their answers. In this way, trust was gained and the respondents felt more comfortable in answering the questions, which is very important in interviews (Malhotra 2010, 200). The interviews lasted on average 30 minutes.

The interview questions that were sent to the rest of the member organization's contact people were sent via e-mail and the respondents are asked to answer by typing

their responses onto a Word-document with the questions on it. The questions were sent to all the members to ensure that enough valuable data was gathered and that a more complete picture of the needs and expectations of the internal stakeholders was received in order to draw better conclusions and recommendations for developing the brand of FinnCham.

Once the data was gathered, it was time for data analysis, which, according to Tesch, consists of two phases in qualitative, exploratory research: data organizing and data interpretation. These two phases however can overlap, but in general data organizing can be thought of as preparation for data interpretation. A way to organize the data is to segment it in a process, which involves de-contextualizing and re-contextualizing. (1990, 115.)

I needed to find segments in the data text, which could be removed and still include a valuable and comprehensible piece of information that can stand on its own, out of context. This is what Tesch means by de-contextualizing. Each segment of data that had been de-contextualized should then be placed in a group coded with a certain title, so that each group has its own topic. This was done, so that the different segments of data grouped together are easily read as an uninterrupted flow by the researcher, making the whole picture of that group more understandable. This process is called re-contextualizing. (Tesch 1990, 115-122.)

After the segmenting process was complete, I did a preliminary analysis of the data and considered whether re-coding or adding of another group was needed for better segmenting. Once I was satisfied with the segmenting, the actual analysis could take place, even though the analysis could start from the very beginning of the above-described process, as it can be an on-going process. (Tesch 1990, 142-145)

I, the researcher, in the case of this thesis, grouped the segments of data according to the investigative questions and under them, according to the interview/questionnaire questions. This may seem evident, but in interviews the respondents may have started answering an unasked question that was still to come in the interview, so could not

solely rely on the interview notes as already segmented data. I did differentiate the responses based on whether they originated from the interviews or the questionnaire, but combined both methods in the result analysis.

5.2 Tools

The two tools I used are telephone interviews and an e-mail distributed questionnaire, with the same questions as in the interview. The questions were standardized open-ended questions sent from the FinnCham e-mail address. The reason for this e-mail address was that it does not look like spam, but instead more credible, coming from a “@chamber.fi” address. This was done to combat low response. The plan was that if the response rate to the first e-mail was low within a week, a second e-mail would have been sent to the interviewees. I also conducted reminder e-mailing to the interviewees that had not responded to the second e-mail in about half a week. In the e-mail, I asked the respondents to deny the calling, if they wished not to participate in the interviews. I planned that if there were no refusals, I would have conducted the telephone interviews the following week, after the e-mails had been sent.

The tool for data analysis was be the above-mentioned de- and re-contextualizing of the data by Tesch. I wrote down each interview on the computer after I had completed each one and divided the answers based on the interview and questionnaire questions. In this way, I had all the answers from each respondent in one place, so I could read it in a continuous flow and analyze the frequency for example of some replies and the contradictions within the answers. However, sometimes the respondents started answering a coming question to another question, so I highlighted the written answers with different colors to code the answers to each question. For example, a respondent may have answered question 7, while thinking they were answering question 4. In this situation I would have therefore highlighted their answer to question 4 with the question 7 colors. I also gave a letter to each respondent, which I marked in the written responses, so that I would stay on track as to who said what. From the de-contextualized data I then extracted conclusions and therefore re-contextualized the data into bigger pictures.

The questions that I sent were:

1. What is your image of the FinnCham brand at present?
2. How do you think the FinnCham network at present can support your organization?
3. How would you describe the FinnCham network in at least four adjectives?
4. What would increase the feeling of your organization being apart of a strong network, because of being part of the FinnCham network?
5. How could your organization benefit more from the FinnCham brand in the future?
6. What do you expect from the FinnCham brand in terms of supporting your organization?
7. How could or could not the cooperation within the FinnCham network, between the member organizations, be strengthened?
8. How would you like to receive information on it in the future?

Questions 1 to 3 attempt to find answers to the first investigative question by mapping out the current situation of the brand. Questions 4 to 6 attempt to find an answer to the second investigative questions by establishing the needs and expectations the respondents have on the brand. Finally, questions 7 and 8 attempt to find answers to the third investigative question by probing how the brand should be designed to meet the needs and expectations of the respondents. I formulated the questions based on what I was trying to figure out and also based on the theory to establish credibility in the conclusions of the answers.

The first, second and third questions were based on Aaker's Brand Identity Planning Model's strategic brand analysis part, in which the establishment of the current perception of the brand is the goal. Also, Ind stated that mapping the current brand perception is vital in developing the brand. In the first question, I therefore sought to map out the current perception of the brand. Through the second question I sought to find out if FinnCham has supported or could support the respondent organizations. The third question sought to discover the current perception of the brand through adjectives, which I could use in the recommendations in building the extended identity through what does and does not work.

The fourth, fifth and sixth questions were based on Aaker's brand identity system part of the Brand Identity Planning Model. In the first question I sought to find out if an emotional connection exists between the respondents and brand and also if the brand's promise of a strong network had been realized. The second questions probed the respondents' needs on the brand and the third questions probed the expectations.

The seventh and the eighth questions were based on the stakeholder theories by Antonacopoulou and Meric, which state the importance of stakeholder cooperation and communication. The seventh questions tried to find out whether the respondents feel there is value in cooperation and how to best implement it. Also, the wording of the question is done so that no assumptions are made of the result. The eighth question sought to find out the communication preferences of the respondents.

6 Interview and questionnaire findings

I will now present the findings from the interviews and the questionnaire. The results are divided according to the investigative questions and sub-divided by the questions I asked in the interviews and questionnaire. The investigative questions are numbered 1 to 3 and the interview/questionnaire questions are indicated by letters (a, b, c) under the investigative questions. The respondents are mentioned as respondent A, B, C etc., because of the anonymity promise granted for them in the study.

The response rate of the e-mail distributed questionnaire was 17.4%. This was calculated by dividing the number of responses by the total population that could have responded and then multiplied the answer by 100%. Therefore the calculation looks like this: $15/86 \times 100\% = 17.4\%$. The response rate for the interviews was 100%, as all 6 interviewees participated in the study.

- 1) What is FinnCham's members' perception of the FinnCham brand at present?
 - a. What is your image of the FinnCham brand at present?

The general feeling amongst the respondents in terms of the FinnCham brand was that it was difficult to articulate because so little was known about the network. Most were aware of the network, but as to what it actually does and how was unclear for them. Respondent F articulated the confusion well, stating that they are aware of what the FinnCham network is, as in what it is physically, but as a brand they had no idea on what it stood for. Two respondents even replied to the questionnaire by saying that they did not have enough knowledge on the network to answer the questions at all. The vagueness of the perception on the brand was captured in respondent B's answer: "...It is some sort of global Finnish network."

The respondents that did have enough knowledge to answer the first question stated that they realized what the physical aspect of the FinnCham network was, i.e. that it is a global network that places the Finnish bilateral Chambers of Commerce, Trade As-

sociations and Trade Guilds under one umbrella brand, but a brand image of the network had yet to be formed in their minds. However, the actual essence of the network was not grasped, as can be seen from the answer of respondent F again when they stated that it was not clear what the mission, targets, its role in terms of Team Finland is, what the operational model is and how it will support the internationalization efforts of Finnish companies and the market entry of foreign companies into Finland. Nine respondents stated this, which depicts the uncertainty of the FinnCham brand within the internal stakeholders.

However, there were contradictory comments, such as from respondents G and N, stating that the brand is “good and trusty” and “rather good”. This being said no clarification on why they think so was mentioned. Respondent K described the initiative of the network as a positive one, as was said by respondent I as well, however they suggested that the brand should be developed in order to define the next steps of operation and how the members of the network should act in order to fully utilize the benefits of the network.

b. How do you think the FinnCham network at present can support your organization?

Due to the fact that the idea of the FinnCham network was quite ambiguous in the minds of the respondents, the support that the network could offer was also unclear. Respondents C and D replied by saying that no results of support or the effects of the brand have been witnessed and thus, no support were gained. Also respondents L and P said the network at present provides no support at all. The value provided by FinnCham is therefore unclear for the members, as was stated by respondent F asking, “operationally, what value does it bring for the members?”.

On the other hand, some of the respondents thought that the network has helped their organizations in gaining visibility for their services and events, as was stated by respondent L, “ It can support well, with good contact network”, but this aspect still needs to be developed, as many did not state this. Another positive point made by respondent B

was that the FinnCham brand “provides legitimacy” to the organizations operating globally, especially the ones not operating under a Chamber of Commerce status, but for example a Trade Association of Trade Guild. FinnCham has made it possible for the organizations of this status to “now be able to say I belong to the FinnCham network”. The fact that they can assert that they are a part of the FinnCham network gives them more credibility in the eyes of other Finns (e.g. company representatives) and this has apparently made the members’ lives easier in terms of being in contact with customers.

c. How would you describe the FinnCham network in at least four adjectives?

The notion of the unclear brand of FinnCham became evident in the answers to this question also. The respondents who were unable to answer the questions at all were understandably unable to answer this question also, but the respondents who had a very unclear image of the FinnCham brand, but knew what the FinnCham brand was physically, as was stated above in answers to the first question, described the brand as vague and unclear. Respondent B described the brand, as “being in its infancy, shattered, young, and looking for direction” and by respondent H as, “a green shoot that needs nurturing”. The last metaphor depicts what the over all view of the internal stakeholders’ is of FinnCham. They understand that it is a newly launched network that is looking for direction “with lots of potential”, by the words of respondent C as they can conclude from the carrying out of this study.

Some surprising adjectives arose as well, which were “active”, “informative” and “effective”, given by respondents C, G and M. These were surprising adjectives because they seem contradictory to the general opinion of the FinnCham in the minds of the internal stakeholders.

- 2) What are the internal stakeholders' expectations and needs on the brand of FinnCham?
 - a. What would increase the feeling of your organization being apart of a strong network, because of being part of the FinnCham network?

The need that shone through all the answers to this question was FinnCham has to clearly explain what it is and what it does. Also, according to respondent F, the headquarters of FinnCham need to explain what it is that the members need to do and know especially in relation the Team Finland, which was launched in 2012. All the internal stakeholders need to understand the essence of FinnCham, its objectives and the brand and it needs to be “crystal clear” in order to truly benefit from it as was highlighted by respondents F, L and Q. So to simplify, clear communication needs to be established and developed. As was said by respondent F as to what the situation currently is, “FinnCham has gathered its troops already and now all that is needed is team leadership”. Respondent H also mentioned the need for “more visible local presence”, as “a couple of e-mails and a high level launch in Finland do not suffice to establish credibility”.

Also, respondent B desired something to bring the network together saying, that “some sort of uniting factor would be useful...thought exchange events could be held!” The events could therefore be in the shape of mutual events where the internal stakeholders can exchange ideas, thoughts, and best practices on for example membership fees, types of events and sponsorship from companies and just meet each other face-to-face. Meeting the other internal stakeholders, or at least the coordinating employees of FinnCham in Finland, face-to-face was highlighted as very important by several respondents, such as respondents H, R and Q. It was mentioned to be important, because “after a face-to-face meeting, it is easier to communicate later”, as was said by respondent B, in order to feel truly connected and to make communication easier.

In addition to this, respondent A mentioned the value of informal relations. By this, they meant that the members “could exchange a couple of words and just chitchat in

an informal way”. This would allow the members to without hesitation be in contact with each other and the FinnCham headquarters. Also, a designated contact person for each Chamber of Commerce, Association and Guild was desired to make communication easier by respondent A.

As FinnCham is currently considered an abstract concept, it was stated that “FinnCham should offer something you could really use/concrete” by respondent S. Respondents E, D and J stated that this concreteness could be in the shape of for example a common logo that could be added onto the members’ websites and materials. In the words of respondent J, “Member organizations should be allowed to use FinnCham logo in their website & communication materials”. This is interesting because there already exists a common logo for FinnCham and it is advised to add it onto at least the websites of the member organizations. It is obvious that the message has not reached the members and that this should be communicated to them again comprehensibly. Respondent F made a comparison between AmCham, the American Chamber of Commerce network, and FinnCham. They said that FinnCham should consider benchmarking itself against AmCham, as it is a well-developed and established brand, which has a clear set of services it provides for different audiences. They have a clear mission, targets and an operational model.

Another point raised was from respondent I stating, “The various volunteer expat organizations are looking for a single contact point to Finland.” This is actually one of the aims of FinnCham, to be the first contact point to Finland, in order to make communication from the globally dispersed organizations to Finland easier. This needs to be worked for and again, communicated to the internal stakeholders. Additionally and in relation to this, respondent I said “What we expect is for FinnCham to take a look at who we are and where we are, communicate this to the industry in Finland, and based on that connect to businesses wanting to do business with our region.” Respondent E made a similar point, “FinnCham could create understanding and raise awareness within Finland of these organizations.”

There clearly is a need for FinnCham to communicate to the industry in Finland of the different organizations and of what they do. In general, what was mentioned as a response to the question at hand was that the organizations wanted increased visibility of their message and of the organizations themselves, so that Finnish companies would be aware of them and that their work would be appreciated.

b. How could your organization benefit more from the FinnCham brand in the future?

Almost all answers to this question highlighted the fact that getting more contacts from companies is crucial. The respondents gave some examples on how the FinnCham network could help them receive these valuable contacts, one being that FinnCham, be it the headquarters or a member(s) organization, could research what kind of companies are interested in certain areas and provide this information to the organizations within those areas. This was emphasized by respondent A, “to find out through the network, what sort of companies want to enter our markets” Another related suggestion was that FinnCham should organize more delegations made up of company representatives to visit areas of interest, as was requested by respondent R.

Increasing of visibility of the organizations was very important to the respondents, as respondent D put it, “We should take advantage of all possible communication channels in order for the customers to reach us”. This was concurred by respondent C by stating that it would be important to, “increase communication and the conspicuousness of our Chamber within Finland”. Respondents E, P and H also spoke about increasing visibility within Finland on their organizations.

Also communication seemed lacking from the FinnCham headquarters’ side, as seven respondents stated that they desired more communication from the headquarters. This became evident in the quotations by respondents C and D above. Respondent E also emphasized the communication aspect by saying it would be useful if, “FinnCham actively conveyed information on us, for example through a newsletter. The content could include what activity is going on in the network”.

Furthermore, FinnCham should communicate the importance of having many consulting offices within a region, as not only one office can serve all as was suggested by respondent E. They stated that FinnCham should map out the different consultants within different regions, so that the network could direct customers to offices that match their needs. This is essential also for customers of the organizations, so they would find the right services. Respondent I approached this matter from a different perspective, stating, “We need to work together to create a regional profile of the market so that Finnish industry will know where their markets are and where they need to concentrate their efforts.”

One idea from respondent B rouse about financial revisions, which came from the need to maintain the service level of the developed Chambers of Commerce, Trade Associations and Guilds. The idea was that FinnCham would raise awareness of these organizations that reside globally, and of the valuable work they do for the economy of Finland, by lobbying this to for example the Confederation of Finnish Industries, EK. Through this, some financial revisions could be made and financial support may even be give to these organizations. Respondent L also suggested “resources to smaller chambers”, but no further suggestion of what was concretely meant by these resources was made.

Another innovative idea from respondent B was to change the names of all the Finnish bilateral Chambers of Commerce, Trade Associations and Trade Guilds globally to FinnCham offices. They stated that, “I would take part in this with pleasure”. This would truly connect the network and would intensify the cooperation and strengthen the connectivity of the organizations to Finland and ultimately create the most credibility for all organizations within the network. This would not necessarily require changing of operations within the different organizations, but if need and desire be, then this could also occur.

c. What do you expect from the FinnCham brand in terms of supporting your organization?

Respondents B and K replied to the question by stating that they did not have any direct expectations on the brand, as joining the network does not require the members to do anything in return, as was stated by respondent B, “I don’t have any expectations, because joining the network doesn’t require anything from us, so we can’t demand anything really.” Also for the fact that it is a young network is acknowledged, so more of the network will be expected later on, which can be seen in respondent Q’s answer, “I’m not sure yet”.

A definite expectation was that FinnCham would help the members network and make it easier for companies to find these Chambers of Commerce, Associations and Guilds through raising awareness of them amongst Finnish companies, as respondent J articulated, “FinnCham can help the Chamber in forging relationships and cooperation with other Chambers of Commerce”, which was supported by respondent A’s answer on what they expected of FinnCham, “provide networking possibilities, so that companies would find us”. No concrete suggestions, however on how this should be implemented was given. Also, it was expected of FinnCham to be able to direct companies to the right offices i.e. know what each office provides and according to the needs of the company, direct them there, as was earlier stated by respondent E. Moreover, respondent I stated that they would like a more personal level of interaction,

“We’d really like to get this to a personal level. We need visits to create engagement and connections, we’d like to invite delegations to visit trade shows in our region, we can help companies exhibiting at trade shows in our region, we can help companies looking into setting up operations in our region.”

The respondents aspire for something concrete, like a “definition of the objectives of FinnCham” as was said by respondent L and not just big and vague promises especially when it comes the Team Finland concept, which was especially highlighted by respondent C. Respondent F wants the headquarters of FinnCham “to be the eyes and ears for us”, along with respondent M, who would like FinnCham to be “an informer who

updates us on essential changes in legal and business environment (in Finland).” This was requested in order for the members to know what is going on in Finland and thus information flow is expected that will reach them despite the circumstances.

In terms of how the various Chambers of Commerce, Trade Associations and Trade Guilds expect to be branded within the network, it became clear that at least one of the organizations expect to be branded as the number one Country-X expert. Respondent D stated that, “under the brand we would be thought of as the number one expert on this country. Within the network, we would be given a certain role as the expert on this country.” They would therefore like a distinct role within the network as an expert on a certain country. This may be troublesome to implement in countries where there are several FinnCham offices operating, so it is to be determined whether some offices can be branded differently from others.

- 3) How could the brand be designed to benefit its internal stakeholders to the fullest and to increase brand awareness and visibility amongst the internal stakeholders?
 - a. How could or could not the cooperation within the FinnCham network, between the member organizations, be strengthened?

Again, increasing of communication was mentioned as a key aspect to strengthen cooperation within the network. However, by this the respondents meant the communication between the FinnCham headquarters and the member organizations, as noticed from the comment from respondent C, “Chambers have different objectives in different countries, so I don’t see the value in cooperation or at least continuous communication between the members. More communication between the organizations and Finland could exist.” Respondent F also stated that continuous communication is not needed but a larger event could be organized annually or once in every two years. A need for continuous and effective communication in the above-mentioned manner was suggested. Continuous cooperation between the members in terms of communication was not seen necessary, as the different markets the organizations operate in are so versatile that it was seen not to bring any added value to the members. On this note

however, a contact list of all the member organizations was seen useful by respondent L, so when the need arises, the members could communicate with each other effectively.

Another suggestion for strengthening the cooperation within the network was to establish some sort of a common platform, as was suggested by respondents D, E and as respondent J stated, “a forum should be established where the members can share experiences and best practices”. There, discussion and cooperation could take place e.g. a web-based platform on the FinnCham website. In addition to this, a FinnCham newsletter distributed for example monthly would be a uniting factor, which would also provide an effective channel for communicating important information as was earlier mentioned in the needs and expectations of the members.

Joint marketing of events was brought up in the responses for this question also. An example is a comment from respondent D, who affirmed that, “competing events should not exist. We should combine resources and if similar events are planned during the same time, they should be combined and marketed together.” The objective of the joint marketing should be to prevent overlapping events of similar nature and to combine resources when two similar events are being organized within a region, i.e. organize them at the same time at the same venue.

Several respondents, such as B, C, F, J and K brought up an idea of a common event where the members could meet each other and exchange thoughts, best practices and ideas and learn from each other, as was commented by respondent J, “An annual summit or conference of Finnish Chamber can be a way forward”, respondent C, “We could gather annually”, respondent B,

“FinnCham day, some sort of a bigger event held in for example Helsinki, or regionally. There would be some very praiseworthy speaker, a proper event, where we could share experiences. I would be interested in hearing what the practices are in other countries.”

The respondents thought that a good interval for the occurrences of these events would be from a year to two years. The event would be called for example FinnCham

Day and it could be held in Helsinki or regionally around the world, depending on the needs of the members. The respondents emphasized the need for interesting and valuable content because as respondent B put it, “The more the event has content and value, the more the members are motivated to participate.” Another aspect mentioned was timing. A favorable timing for most members according to respondent F would be, “...at the end of summer, approximately at the end of August, in Finland, when most of the expat Finns are on holiday in Finland and thus could combine the holiday trip with the event.” Respondent F goes on to mention other possible participants to the event, “Finnish Ambassadors based in various countries, commercial secretaries and attachés, who will most like also be on holiday in Finland during that time.” The reason for the importance of the timing aspect is the fact that most of FinnCham’s internal stakeholders work on a voluntary basis, meaning with very modest resources and no travel budget.

In addition to this event, within some countries, the Chambers of Commerce, Trade Associations and Trade Guilds organize annual meetings where representatives of the organizations located in that country meet to discuss relevant issues. The respondents F and I from these countries advised a representative from the FinnCham headquarters to participate in these events, so as to increase visibility, cooperation and involvement of FinnCham in important matters within each country.

A completely different type of event was suggested by respondent M,

“You could create a regular meeting point e.g. with some restaurant in Helsinki (and other cities) and bring in speakers of interesting topics once a month (e.g. last Wednesday of the month lunch time).”

This would mean continuous cooperation though, meaning that the earlier mentioned comments on the condemnation of continuous cooperation and communication is not the common opinion on the network. Therefore, perhaps a means to communicate and cooperate continuously within the network should be provided, so the members who feel this does bring value could take part in it.

b. How would you like to receive information on it in the future?

The answers to this question proved that the members have very versatile preferences in communication media. Eleven respondents stated that e-mail would be the easiest channel to receive information, but there lies a risk, as brought up by respondent B, “it can get lost in the mass”. There was also criticism towards e-mails, as respondents C and D felt that they already receive too much e-mail, and more is not aspired for.

Respondent I was the only one to mention the FinnCham website as the channel they would prefer to receive information through. However, there lies a risk of the member never visiting the website, and thus never receiving the information. The newsletter needs to be, according to several responses, and quoted from respondent B, “... of quality and clearly constructed and written so that it can sell the content in a couple of seconds.” Also respondent E suggested that, “the newsletter could serve as a reminder to go visit the website. It could contain all the most important things, presented briefly.” The newsletter could therefore be a link to the website, where broader and more detailed content would be provided. Respondent C suggested the type of information to be included in the newsletter as market and economic information on Finland. Respondent E wished for information on the other members in the forms of articles, which could be included in the newsletter so others could mirror their own operations to each other and develop. Respondent A aspired for informal relations and interaction with the members and especially to the headquarters.

Five respondents mentioned social media as a channel to receive information on FinnCham. The channels mentioned were for example Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. Respondent E suggested that, “It would be good, if FinnCham participated in the local social medias”. This was mentioned because in this way, representatives of local firms would become easily aware of the network, and if interested in the Finnish markets, they could get in contact with FinnCham. Some local social medias mentioned were Germany’s Xing and China’s Weibo.

Respondent F recommended a channel, through which the members could all participate at the same time and get value out of. They went on to describe it,

“FinnCham could organize a webinar every quarter, that the members could follow online. There would have to be a good speaker and commenting should be allowed on a moderated platform. This would be a virtual one-theme lecture, which could be held twice a day to overcome time zone differences. This would be of great assistance in learning and allow for an interactive way to communicate and cooperate. Topics of interest could be asked in the newsletters, so everyone could contribute to the seminars.”

This would assist in learning within the network and would provide an interactive way to communicate and cooperate for the FinnCham network.

7 Discussion and conclusions

The objective of this thesis was to provide branding recommendations for the FinnCham network based on the expectations and needs of its internal stakeholders. The research was of qualitative nature and insight from the internal stakeholders was gained through standardized interviews conducted with 6 respondents and a questionnaire with the same standardized open-ended questions that was sent to the entire population. The results of the research are now reflected upon based on the summary of the theory provided in chapter 4.3.

According to Aaker's Brand Identity Planning Model, strategic brand analysis, which includes customer analysis, (in this thesis the customers are thought of as the internal stakeholders) needs to be carried out in order for the brand designers to understand the needs and motivations they have toward and of the brand. This was accomplished in this thesis through the interviews and questionnaire.

The answers to the first interview question highlighted the need for this research, as the perception of FinnCham currently amongst the internal stakeholders was very unclear. As Ind pointed (1997, 92), the current perception on the brand needs to be established, before developing it and ultimately communicating it to the internal stakeholders. This information was attempted to be extracted by the second interview question as well, when the respondents were asked on how they think the network at present can support their organizations. The unclearness of the brand was again noticed, as most stated that no support is provided at the moment, or at least no concrete results can be seen. One respondent contradicted this by stating that the brand has provided their organization with credibility, as they are now part of a larger network, and are thus being recognized and acknowledged for their work for the first time.

Aaker writes that a brand should be analyzed through different associations, such as Brand as organization and Brand as person. These attributes create texture for the brand, which makes it more interesting. (Aaker 1996, 79.) The third interview question

attempted to find out associations through adjectives of the current state of the network. Through these adjectives, the brand designers can then pick the adjectives that would suit the brand and work to eliminate the negative ones. The brand was described as vague, being in its infancy and looking for direction. Some respondents could not even answer the question, because the brand was so unfamiliar to them. This suggests that the brand needs to be more clearly communicated to the internal stakeholders. Surprising adjectives also came up, which were active, informative and effective. I was surprised to find these words mentioned, as they seem completely contradictory to the general view on the brand. It is therefore worth noting, that the brand message has reached some stakeholders, or then perhaps these are active members, who have an interest in the network and information has been gathered on it on their own. Also politeness could have been an affecting factor in the answers, even though anonymity was promised to the respondents.

In Aaker's Brand Identity Planning Model, he affirms that through the associations of the core and extended identity, a value proposition or credibility can be extracted (Aaker 130-131). As was mentioned in the summary of the theory, a brand needs a value proposition if no emotional connection exists between the brand and the customer. From the conclusions above, it can be deduced, that no emotional connection exists, as the brand is unclear for the respondents. Therefore a value proposition should be designed for FinnCham. The value proposition should provide functional and emotional benefits in the case of FinnCham. The functional benefits could be concrete help for the organizations through provision of guidance, information and credibility. The emotional benefits could include provision of safety and security from belonging to a strong network where the members are not alone.

These functional and emotional benefits were suggested in the answers to the fourth interview question, where I asked the respondents on what would increase the feeling of being part of a strong network by belonging to the FinnCham network. The need for a clear definition of the objectives of the brand was wished for, along with raising awareness within Finland of the organizations located globally, which would provide the functional benefits of the brand. Also, something to unite the network with was

desired, possibly through common events and a logo, which would in turn provide the emotional benefit of a sense of security. A logo however already exists, so this needs to be explained to the internal stakeholders again. Emotional benefits would also be gained through more communication from the headquarters to the global offices.

Radical suggestions from the fifth interview question were the provision of financial aid and resources for the organizations and changing the name of the organizations to FinnCham offices. Financial revisions and resources would surely provide a functional benefit, but as to how this could be done remains an issue that needs further investigation. The name changing would also provide a sense of belonging and thus, an emotional benefit. The changing of the names of the organizations is linked to brand architecture, as was discussed in the theory. Currently, FinnCham is an endorsed brand (Mottram s.a. in Hart & Murphy 1998, 65-66) but the name changing would change the brand architecture to a monolithic one. This however, may not be welcomed by all organizations within the FinnCham network, so perhaps a hybrid brand structure would be appropriate, where some of the organizations would be called FinnCham, and the ones not willing to change their names could remain as they are.

The sixth question aimed at finding out the needs of the internal stakeholders on FinnCham as well as the expectations. It is important to find out the expectations, as they reveal whether the brand serves its “customers” or not at present. Also, if unmet expectations are revealed, it makes brand design easier. Some had no expectations at all, and this could be because the brand was so unclear to some respondents still. Increasing of the organizations’ visibility in Finland and amongst Finnish companies was the number one expectation, however, no concrete suggestions as to how this could be done was given. Also, more informal and personal interaction and communication was mentioned, in order to familiarize with each other and to make communication easier. Also, something concrete was mentioned again, especially in terms of the Team Finland concept. Additionally, one respondent wished their organization to be branded as the number one country X expert within the network. However, this may cause friction with FinnCham’s cooperative partners like Finpro, who also assist companies in internationalization.

The seventh question had to do with cooperation within the network and whether or not this could be strengthened. Antonacopoulou and Meric suggest that cooperation and communication needs to exist in a network in order for it to function well (2005, in Bonnafeous-Boucher & Pesqueux 2005, 126). However, what I found from the respondents was that most did not want continuous cooperation between the internal stakeholders, but more from the headquarters to the global offices. A contradictory comment by one respondent however was given, which was a request for a contact list, to make interaction amongst the internal stakeholders easier. Perhaps therefore a contact list should be provided just in case. Also a common platform on for example the FinnCham website could be provided for this purpose.

Joint and combined marketing was another suggestion, and in order for this to succeed, some type of a knowledge exchange system is needed. Finally an event held for example annually to bring all internal stakeholders together was proposed by many respondents. Common events ranged in forms and the various suggestions, but the underlying point was to bring the internal stakeholders together.

The eighth and last question enquired the internal stakeholders on their communication preferences to find out how cooperation could be made most effective in the network. The results showed that most respondents preferred e-mailing, but lots of arguments against it were made referring to the possibility of the message being lost in the mass. Social media was the second most popular option and FinnCham was advised to take part in local social medias as well to maximize visibility and awareness. Also a well-prepared newsletter was suggested as an effective way to receive information on the network and as a means to remind the stakeholders to visit the website. Useful information was regarded as current news in Finland, market information and information on the members of the FinnCham network, in order for the members to learn from each other's best practices and ideas. Lastly, an effective way to interact and communicate was the suggestion of executing webinars, which would enable an interactive way to communicate within the network.

Once the identity is designed and decided upon, it needs to be actively communicated to the audience. This is called the brand position. (Aaker & Joachimsthaler 2000, 41.) The results from this thesis can guide the brand designers in choosing the elements for the FinnCham brand and thus help in positioning the brand. In choosing how to communicate the brand to the internal stakeholders, one can look at Ind's proposed three forms of effective communication, which were mass, segmented or one-to-one (Ind 1997, 92-93).

7.1 Validity and reliability

Validity and reliability need to be discussed in order to determine the applicability of the results from this thesis. According to Hammersley (1990, 57 in Silverman 2005, 210) validity means the truth and the extent to which an account accurately represents the phenomena to which it refers. Reliability is according to Hammersley (1992, 67 in Silverman 2005, 210) the degree of consistency with which instances are assigned to the same category by different observers or by the same observer in different occasions.

I attempted to reach validity in this thesis by presenting deviant results to the investigative questions. I sought to seek explanations to these deviants, but these were of course speculations only. However, I noted that one explanation could not account for all variances in the data, so the speculations were only assigned to one answer at a time.

I sought credibility to my thesis by choosing the right kinds of respondents for my thesis. They were chosen in cooperation with FinnCham personnel, and the respondents apart from one were all the heads of the organizations they represented, which ensured that they knew what they were talking about, because they most likely had plenty of knowledge on their organizations. The respondent, who was not a leader of their organizations, was a leader in the internationalization services of their organizations, which assured relevant knowledge in terms of the interview questions. Also the sources used in the secondary research part of the thesis can be evaluated as to the credibility they pose. The main theoretical concepts were used from books of which some may seem

outdated. However, since the theoretical models have remained unchanged over the years, it can be said that they are still relevant and remain credible.

I think my interview questions served the purpose of finding answers to the investigative questions well, except for the first, fifth and sixth questions. Campbell advised to leave out jargon from the interview questions in order to prevent confusion of the respondents. (Campbell s.a. in Hart & Murphy 1998, 59.) In the first, fifth and sixth interview questions I have however formulated the questions to include the word “brand”. A definition of the word “brand” could have been provided to avoid various interpretations of the word, which in turn could have affected the answers. Also the word “image” in the first interview question should have been changed to “perception” to be more precise to the purpose. Another factor that could have influenced the results were the differences between the organizations. Some of the organizations are much older with more experience and the natures of the various environments they operate in are very different from one another. This results in different needs for the organizations, and thus different sorts of answers to the interview questions.

As to the repeatability of this research, I believe that a second researcher would obtain the same results as I have obtained. The data analysis was consistent in terms of methods and tools on each respondent’s answers and deviant answers were also accounted for. In order to receive even more valid results jargon should be left out of the interview questions.

The applicability of the results of the thesis is quite good, as the recommendations are concrete suggestions. Where the suggestions were not concrete and where it was unclear as to how to practically implement the results, I have mentioned it. The recommendations for further research gives an outline of what should still be investigated in order to implement the suggestions that lack a clear practical implementation idea behind them.

7.2 Recommendations for further research

The results from this thesis created a need to conduct further research into four instances. The first one is to conduct benchmarking to the AmCham network. As was stated by respondent F, the AmCham network has a well defined operational model and services targeted at different audiences. Therefore FinnCham should conduct a case study on AmCham and benchmark its operations to the operations of AmCham which would assist in creating a well-functioning network.

Also, further investigation into the financial and resource revisions should be done and especially on how to increase the awareness of the FinnCham organizations within Finland, which would facilitate these revisions. The third recommendation for further investigation is the name changing of the FinnCham organizations to only “FinnCham”. Questionnaires should be distributed to find out the willingness to do so and also research into how effective and beneficial this would be in terms of the customers’ awareness of the network should be conducted. Finally, investigation into how a common communication platform should be implemented should be carried out. The investigation should include where this platform would exist and how to moderate it.

7.3 Reflection on own learning

Writing this thesis was a great learning experience for me as a student of international business specializing in marketing. The theoretical framework made me understand branding in its many applications to business and how it affects the success of any company or organization. I also understood the importance of everyone in the organization comprehending the brand identity and the difficulty in launching a new brand, especially in a network-type organization that FinnCham is.

I also learned about conducting qualitative research and the many methods in which it can be applied to finding a solution to a research problem. Finding a way to adapt it to suit the purpose of the thesis was demanding, as no certain guidelines exist. In addition to this, I realized the immense importance of time management, as it sometimes

proved difficult to match the schedules of the interview respondents to my own. However, this served as a challenge worth taking, as I feel like I have grown as a researcher at the same time. Finally, consultation with the commissioning organization, FinnCham, was of great help during the entire thesis process, of which I am very grateful for.

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Attachments

Attachment 1. Cover letter for interview request

STUDY ON THE FINNCHAM BRAND BUILDING

Dear Sirs,

I am a Bachelor's student writing my thesis on brand building for the FinnCham network. The aim of my study is to give recommendations for the Finnish FinnCham team on brand development to better serve the members of the FinnCham network.

I would be very grateful if you had time to answer the attached questionnaire and help me gain information on your needs and expectations on the FinnCham network.

Through answering the questionnaire you will have a chance to participate in developing the brand. The questionnaire contains of 8 open-ended questions. Please send your answers to this FinnCham e-mail address finncham@chamber.fi no later than 9th of November 2012.

All answers will be treated anonymously.

The FinnCham team and myself very much appreciate your answers and the time spent on developing the brand.

Yours faithfully,

Hanna Hyvärinen

Bachelor's student
FinnCham

Attachment 2. Cover letter for questionnaire

STUDY ON THE FINNCHAM BRAND BUILDING

Dear Sirs,

I am a Bachelor's student writing my thesis on brand building for the FinnCham network. The aim of my study is to give recommendations for the Finnish FinnCham team on brand development to better serve the members of the FinnCham network.

I would be very grateful if you had time to be interviewed and thus help me gain information on your needs and expectations on the FinnCham network. The interview contains 8 open-ended questions and the interview will last for approximately 30-45 minutes.

Six members of the FinnCham network will be interviewed. All the other members will have a chance to participate in my study by answering a questionnaire, which will be sent at the same time as this interview request. All answers will be treated anonymously.

Attached you will find the questionnaire, so you can read the questions in advance. I will be conducting the telephone interviews next week (week 45). If you have a special date or time you would like to be interviewed or if you wish not to participate in the interview, please reply as soon as possible.

The FinnCham team and myself very much appreciate your answers and the time spent on developing the brand.

Yours faithfully,

Hanna Hyvärinen

Bachelor's student
FinnCham

Attachment 3. Questions sent to interviewees and other respondents

1. What is your image of the FinnCham brand at present?
2. How do you think the FinnCham network at present can support your organization?
3. How would you describe the FinnCham network in at least four adjectives?
4. What would increase the feeling of your organization being apart of a strong network, because of being part of the FinnCham network?
5. How could your organization benefit more from the FinnCham brand in the future?
6. What do you expect from the FinnCham brand in terms of supporting your organization?
7. How could or could not the cooperation within the FinnCham network, between the member organizations, be strengthened?
8. How would you like to receive information on it in the future?

Attachment 4. Overlay matrix

Research Problem (RP)	Investigative Questions (IQs)	Theoretical Framework (concepts & models)	Measurement Questions	Results (Your hypothesis of anticipated results)
Developing branding recommendations for the FinnCham network on the expectations and needs of its internal stakeholders.	What is FinnCham's members' perception of the FinnCham brand at present?	Branding (chapter 3)	1,2,3	My hypothesis is that the brand is little known and no clear perception of the brand exists.
	What are the internal stakeholders' expectations and needs on the brand of FinnCham?	Branding and stakeholder networking (chapter 3 and 4)	4,5,6	Increasing visibility and learning more about the network and its benefits.
	How could the brand be designed to benefit its internal stakeholders to the fullest and how to increase brand awareness and visibility amongst the internal stakeholders?	Branding (chapter 3)	7,8	More communication from the coordinating party is needed in order to clearly explain the essence of FinnCham.